

# Life on the Coast is Easy?

## How native plants are built for life near the beach



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# Coastal Landscaping Challenges

- Poor, sandy soil
- Heat
- Drought conditions
- Frequent storms
- Saltwater exposure and soil salinity
- Strong coastal winds
- Salt-aerosol damage





# What is “Native”?

Species that evolve naturally in an environment without human intervention

Plants are adapted to local soil and climate conditions over thousands of years

Co-evolve with other species and form interdependent and highly specialized relationships that are necessary for the other's survival



# Why plant Natives?

- Uniquely adapted to local environmental conditions
- Generally require less care and less water once established
- Protect local water quality by reducing the need for fertilizer
- Provide the basis of the ecosystem and habitat for our native insects and wildlife





Lucy Bradley CCO



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# Live Oak

*Quercus virginiana*

---

40-80' tall, 40-100' spread, not a "true" evergreen

Adaptable to both clay and sandy soils that are acidic and well-drained

Most wind resistant tree

'Cathedral' cultivar





Imperial Moth (*Eacles imperialis*)

Hosts: *Pinus* sp., *Acer* sp., *Quercus* sp. *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Sassafras albidum*



# Shumard Oak

*Quercus shumardii*

---

40-80' tall, 40-50' spread

Adaptable to wide  
variety of soils, very  
stress tolerant

Great tree for urban  
settings

Wildlife value



Gitta Hasing











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Janet and Phil  
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# Eastern Red Cedar

*Juniperus virginiana*

---

Evergreen tree that can grow to 30+' tall, width 12-24'

Fast growing conifer

Extremely drought tolerant

Provides cover and food for wildlife



# Sweetbay Magnolia

*Magnolia virginiana*

---

20+' tall, semi-evergreen tree or multi-stemmed shrub, deer resistant, 10-20' width

Fragrant flowers

Larval host for Spicebush Swallowtail and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies

Medium-high wind resistance



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Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

UNCW Campus- Longleaf Pine and  
Sweetbay Magnolia





Sweetbay Magnolia  
(*Magnolia virginiana*)







# American Holly

*Ilex opaca*

---

40-60' tall, full sun to part shade

Will take a broad range of soils and is pollution tolerant

Flowers are attractive to pollinators and fruits for wildlife

Highly wind resistant





# Yaupon Holly

*Ilex vomitoria*

---

Large shrub or small tree, can reach 10-20' tall, 8-12' width

Very drought tolerant

Female plants produce attractive red berries

Very attractive to pollinators







# Dwarf Yaupon Holly

*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana'

---

Dense, compact, evergreen shrub 3-5' tall, 3-6' width

Drought and salt spray tolerant

Grows rapidly

Has a more formal appearance









# Inkberry

*Ilex glabra*

---

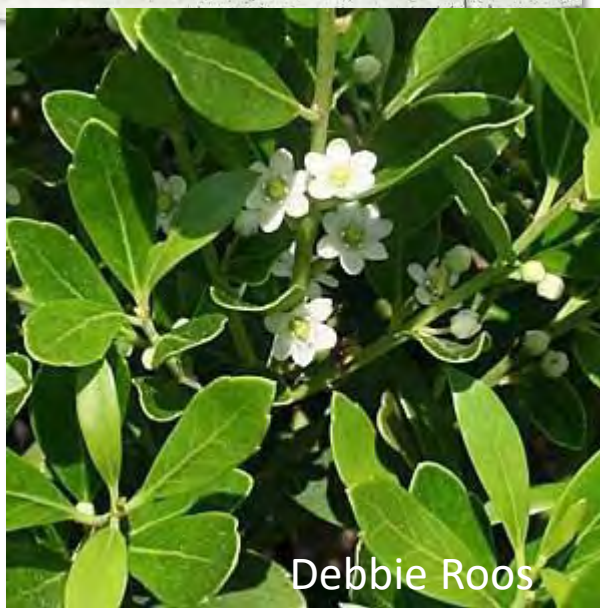
Evergreen shrub

Slow growing, 5-8' tall

Tolerates a variety of  
soils, moderately salt  
tolerant

Cover and food for birds  
and pollinators enjoy  
flowers

Dwarf cultivar:  
'Shamrock'  
3-4' tall







# Dwarf Palmetto

*Sabal minor*

---

2-5' tall, 4-6' width

Drought and moderately  
salt tolerant

Most cold hardy native  
palm

Fruits eaten by robins,  
raccoons, and other  
birds and mammals





# Wax Myrtle

*Myrica cerifera*

---

Evergreen tree/shrub,  
15-20' at maturity

Native to NC marshes,  
swamps, fresh-brackish  
streams

Great for erosion, wind  
and salt spray tolerant

Wildlife value





# Beautyberry

*Callicarpa americana*

---

3-8' tall, Full sun

Deciduous Shrub

Fruits appear August-Oct  
Valuable food source for  
songbirds and small  
mammals





# Yucca

*Yucca filamentosa*

---

Evergreen sword-shaped leaves with curly filaments

Prefers coarse, sandy soils in full sun

Tall panicle of white flowers attracts pollinators



‘Color Guard’





# Muhly Grass

*Muhlenbergia capillaris*

---

4' tall, 3' width

Long-lived, little to no insect or disease pests and highly resistant to deer grazing

Tolerates heat, humidity, drought, poor soil and is highly salt tolerant









# Little Bluestem

*Schizachyrium scoparium*

---

2' tall, Vigorous, long rooted grass

Good for erosion control:  
Stream banks, slopes,  
rain gardens

Larval host plant for  
skippers, seeds eaten by  
birds

Cut back in March







FOR DRY AREAS WITH SUN TO PART-SHADE

SUN:    
SOIL MOISTURE:   
SEASONAL COLOR: AUG-FEB



This design can be used for a foundation planting, stand-alone bed or as a border along a road, driveway, walkway or patio. The number of coastal N.C. native plants that thrive in the dry, hot conditions around a building's foundation is limited, but the species in this design should be suitable for most buildings that have rain gutters. In addition, these plants produce pollinator-friendly flowers and berries that will attract birds to your yard. The evergreen inkberry and dwarf yaupon are slow growing. As they mature, they will improve building energy efficiency.

Dwarf palmetto (*Sabal minor*) is a great substitute for the deciduous beautyberry, if you prefer different leaves and an evergreen plant.

You also can plant lower-growing perennials, like orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm'), at the front of the border.

Prune shrubs in late winter as needed.

**A INKERRY**

**B DWARF YAUPON**

**C BEAUTYBERRY**

20'

5'

4.5'

4.5'

4.5'

[illegible]





**Inkberry**  
*Ilex glabra*



**Dwarf Yaupon Holly**  
*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana'



**Beautyberry**  
*Callicarpa americana*



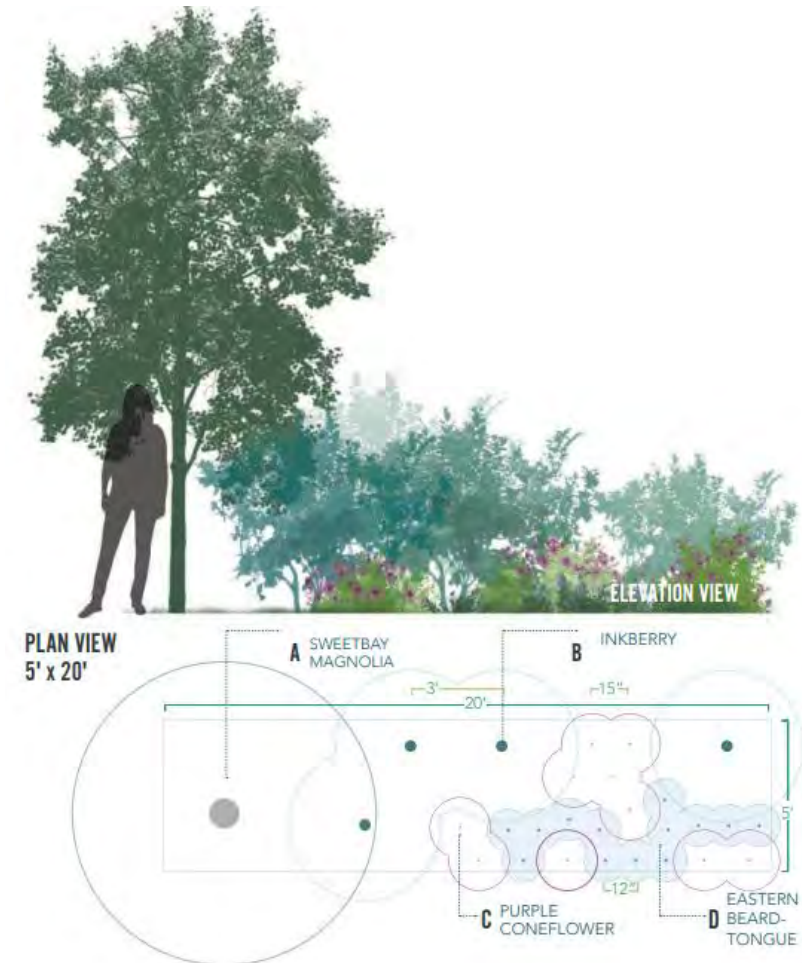
**Dwarf Palmetto**  
*Sabal minor*



# Use a Diversity of Plants



Arborvitae (*Thuja* 'Green Giant')







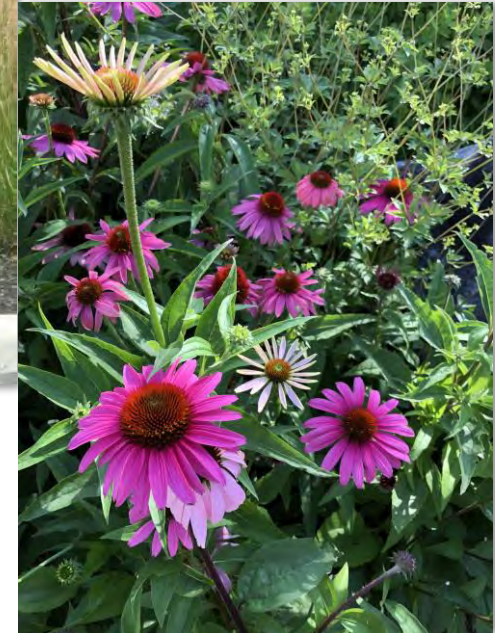
**Sweetbay Magnolia**  
*Magnolia virginiana*



**Inkberry**  
*Ilex glabra*



**Beardtongue**  
*Penstemon digitalis* 'Huskers Red'



**Purple Coneflower**  
*Echinacea purpurea*



# Surf City Roundabout



Eastern Red Cedar  
Dwarf Palmetto  
Dwarf Yaupon Holly  
Yaupon Holly  
Magnolia 'Little Gem'  
Laurel Oak or  
Darlington Oak





**Dwarf Palmetto**  
*Sabal palmetto*



**Yaupon Holly**  
*Ilex vomitoria*



**Sand Laurel Oak or Darlington Oak**  
*Quercus hemisphaerica*



**Dwarf Yaupon Holly**  
*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana'



**Little Gem Magnolia**  
*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Little Gem'



**Eastern Red Cedar**  
*Juniperus virginiana*





North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox contains detailed descriptions and photographs of 4,655 plants that grow in and around North Carolina.

## Native Trees, Shrubs, and Grasses for Urban Coastal Landscapes



Find a Plant

Cultural Conditions

- Light
- Soil Texture
- Soil pH
- Soil Drainage
- Available Space To Plant
- NC Region
- USDA Plant Hardiness Zone

Landscape

- Landscape Location
- Landscape Theme
- Design Feature
- Attracts
- Resistance To Challenges
  - Black Walnut 243
  - Compaction 72
  - Deer 1695
  - Diseases 265
  - Drought 1625
  - Dry Soil 693
  - Erosion 237
  - Fire 136
  - Foot Traffic 52

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Plant Detail

Lagerstroemia indica

Similar but less problematic plants:  
*Styphnolobium affine*

*Lagerstroemia indica* is often confused with:  
*Lagerstroemia lilii*

*Lagerstroemia* 'Natchez'

Native alternative(s) for *Lagerstroemia indica*:  
*Aesculus pavia*

*Cercis canadensis*

**Common Name(s):** Common Crape Myrtle; Crape Flower; Crape Lilac of the South  
Previously known as: *Lagerstroemia chinensis*

**Phonetic Spelling**  
la-ger-STRO-me-a-IN-dik-ka

**Description**  
Common crape myrtle is a deciduous, erect, multi-trunked, tree or shrub in the loosestrife family (Lythraceae). It is native to the Philippines, Japan and central Himalayas to southern China and Indochina. The genus name honors Magnus von Lagerstrom, who was a Swedish botanist and director of the Swedish East Indies Company. The species epithet references its native origin in India. The common name is derived from the crape paper-like petals and the bark and foliage features that are similar to the myrtle plant.

It requires full sun and moist, well-drained soil, though it will tolerate occasionally wet or dry soil once established. Place it in a sheltered location protected from winter winds and mulch the soil to protect the roots. It resists deer, drought and pollution. Propagate it by seed or stem cutting. A rapid grower, common crape myrtle can reach





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